
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2086

Brief Description: Regarding voluntary participation in a state or national animal identification system.

Sponsors: Representatives Short, Dunshee, Kretz, Williams, Morris, Shea, Blake, Ormsby, Smith, Roach, Pearson, McCune, Takko, Orcutt, Warnick and Kristiansen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits any officer of the state from mandating, coercing, or otherwise forcing participation in a state or national animal identification system.

Hearing Date: 2/17/09

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117)

Background:

National Animal Identification System.

In 2004 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiated the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) as an information system to support ongoing animal disease monitoring, surveillance, and eradication programs. The system was planned to be used in all states to identify and track animals as they commingled with animals other than those in their premises of origin. The system was intended to enable animal health officials to trace a sick animal or group of animals back to the herd or premises that was the most likely source of infection. A stated long-term NAIS goal was to be able to identify all premises and animals that had direct contact with a foreign animal disease or domestic disease of concern within 48 hours of discovery. Species included in the NAIS are: bovine (cattle and bison); swine; sheep; goats; equine (horses, mules, and donkeys); poultry; camelids (llamas and alpacas); and ratites (emus and ostriches).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The USDA published a draft Strategic Plan in April 2005 that called for mandatory premises registration and animal identification for cattle by January 2008. In April 2006 the USDA announced new timelines and benchmarks with a goal of achieving full producer participation by 2009. The USDA has since announced that the NAIS will be a voluntary program, not mandatory.

The NAIS implementation was to involve both the federal and state departments of agriculture in three phases: premise registration, animal identification, and animal movement reporting. The first phase, premise registration, would be a state and tribal responsibility. A premise is a location where animals are housed, held, or commingled. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) began voluntary premise registrations in January 2005.

The second phase of NAIS was to involve issuance of unique individual or group lot animal identification numbers. Nationally, a number of industry/government species-specific work groups have formed to consider which types of identification will work best for their particular animals. Methods under consideration include radio frequency identification tags, retinal scans, DNA, and other options.

The third phase was to focus on collection of information on animal movement from one premises to another.

Cattle Identification Advisory Committee.

In 2006 the Legislature required the Director of the WSDA to appoint an advisory committee composed of representatives from various segments of the cattle industry to evaluate the NAIS requirements, research how other states are implementing the requirements for cattle, evaluate demonstration projects conducted by WSDA, and recommend a plan for implementing the federal requirements for the cattle industry in Washington.

Summary of Bill:

Any officer of the state is prohibited from mandating, coercing, or otherwise forcing participation in a state or national animal identification system. The prohibition on state officials includes using exclusionary tactics, withholding benefits, or denying licenses or other documents from the state. State officers also are forbidden from registering real property or otherwise enrolling a person into an animal identification system without the person's prior knowledge or consent.

Voluntary participation in an animal identification system is allowable.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.